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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/966,761	10/01/2001	Robert Cregg Barnes	P07353US00/MP	6832

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EXAMINER

HYLTON, ROBIN ANNETTE

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3727

DATE MAILED: 11/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/966,761

Applicant(s)

BARNES ET AL

Examiner

Robin A. Hylton

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 June 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6, 8-11 and 14-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1, 2, 4-6, 9-11 and 14-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3 and 8 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

2. Claims 1,2,4-6,9-11, and 14-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Polo in view of Pettersen (US 3,419,198).

Polo teaches the claimed container except for the tab extending less than 90 or 180 degrees around the top surface of the container body.

Pettersen teaches it is known to provide a hinged tab having a depressible actuator on a container, the tab extending less than 180 degrees and less than 90 degrees around the container body.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of a smaller tab to the container of Polo. Doing so provides a more stable closure mechanism having greater resistance to being inadvertently torn from the body.

3. Claims 16,18,19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen (US Des. 321,788).

Chen teaches a container having an outer wall and an inner wall forming a hollow body, especially when the tabs are closed. A single open tab uncovers an aperture in the hollow body. Chen does not teach a true toroid shaped body.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the inner and outer side walls of a smooth round shape since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the shape of a component. A change in shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

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4. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen in view of Polo.

Chen as modified teaches the claimed container except for concave upper and lower walls of the body.

Polo teaches it is known to provide concave upper and lower walls to a container body.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of concave upper and lower body walls to the modified container of Chen. Doing so provides a more rounded container having no sharp edges.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

5. Claims 3 and 8 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Response to Arguments***

6. Applicant's arguments filed June 28, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, one desirous of a tab having an actuating portion would turn to a prior art reference having such structure. While the tab of Pettersen extends a radial direction, it also

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has a circumferential extension. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would use the knowledge of tabs having an actuating portion to combine the prior art as set forth herein.

Regarding applicant's remarks regarding the radial extension of Pettersen, the circumferential extension of the tab (seen in the embodiment in figures 1-5) is less than 180 degrees. Although the shape of the tab is not the same as that of the inventive container and tab, the claims do not distinguish the inventive container and tab from that of the prior art. Moreover, the combination is not to change the shape of the Polo tab by making it extend diametrically across the toroidal-shaped body as alleged by applicant. The combination is made to lessen the amount of the circumferential extension of the tab of Polo.

Again, applicant asserts the tabs of the prior art do not have a circumferential extension with regards to the extension of the tab of Chen. Wherein the tab extends along the circumference of the container body, it has a circumferential extension.

Regarding applicant's remarks of the ornamental design of Chen, it is clearly seen from the figures that the container of Chen has the structural features as set forth in the claims of the instant invention. The rejection does not read into the structural features since they are clearly disclosed by the patent.

Again, in response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, one of ordinary skill in the art would indeed have knowledge that providing

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a smooth outer circumference of a container is not only easier to manufacture, but is also easier to store and handle.

For at least these reason, the rejections are made final.

***Conclusion***

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

8. In order to reduce pendency and avoid potential delays, Group 3720 is encouraging FAXing of responses to Office Actions directly into the Group at (703) 872-9306. This practice may be used for filing papers not requiring a fee. It may also be used for filing papers which require a fee by applicants who authorize charges to a PTO deposit account. Please identify the examiner and art unit at the top of your cover sheet. Papers submitted via FAX into Group 3720 will be promptly forwarded to the examiner.

9. It is called to applicant's attention that if a communication is faxed before the reply time has expired, applicant may submit the reply with a "Certificate of Facsimile" which merely asserts that the reply is being faxed on a given date. So faxed, before the period for reply has expired, the reply may be considered timely. A suggested format for a certificate follows:

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I hereby certify that this correspondence for Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_ is being facsimiled to The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office via fax number (703) 872-9306 on the date shown below:

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_


10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robin Hylton whose telephone number is (703) 308-1208. The examiner works a part-time schedule and can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Eastern time).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lee Young, can be reached on (703) 308-2572.

If in receiving this Office Action it is apparent to applicant that certain documents are missing, e.g., copies of references cited, form PTO-1449, form PTO-892, etc., requests for copies of such papers should be directed to Errica Miller at (703) 306-4005.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1148 or may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

RAH  
October 30, 2004

  
Robin A. Hylton  
Primary Examiner  
GAU 3727